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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
23 October 1973

State Dept
review
completed

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

MIDDLE EAST

DIA review completed

Situation Report Number 73
(As of 2230 EDT)

THE MILITARY SITUATION

GENERAL

1. Heavy fighting continues along the southern sector of the Egyptian front as the Israelis continue to push south along the west bank of the canal. Their push toward Suez apparently has bypassed the city; resistance is fierce and the status of the fighting is unclear. Meanwhile, Damascus has finally announced its acceptance of the cease-fire resolution, after light ground activity on the Syrian front today. A naval battle was under way off the Syrian coast during the night, however.

EGYPTIAN FRONT

2. Fighting continued along the southern sector of the Suez front during the night, but few details are available.

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headland," south of Suez. Earlier, an Israeli armored column had been reported heading for the town of Adabiya, possibly to cut off an Egyptian retreat.

3. If Suez were to fall, the Egyptian forces in the southern sector of the Sinai would be cut off from their supply lines, and the Israelis would be in a position to block their return from the east bank. Israeli military analyst General Herzog today claimed that this stranded Egyptian force had caused cease-fire violations by disobeying orders and "endeavoring to break out in desperation."

4. Egyptian military spokesmen continued to deny responsibility for any cease-fire violations and claimed that Egyptian military activity was only in response to Israeli violations. According to an Egyptian official source, the Israeli force on the west bank of the Suez Canal on 21 October was smaller

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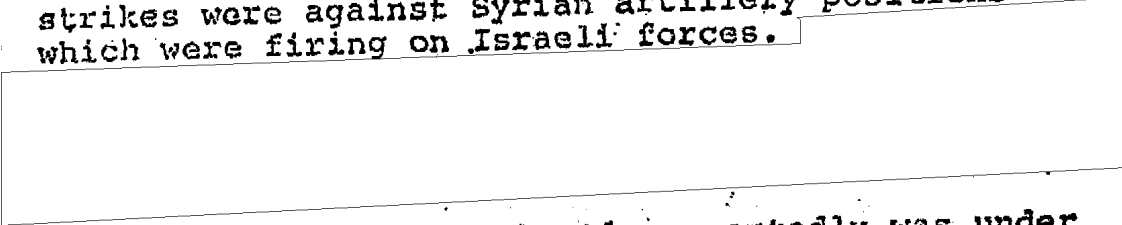
5. Israeli aircraft were active during the night in the vicinity of Suez, over the southern Sinai, and air strikes were reported in the vicinity of Al Hafair on the western shore of the Gulf of Suez some 15 miles south of Suez. Little Egyptian air activity was noted during the night.

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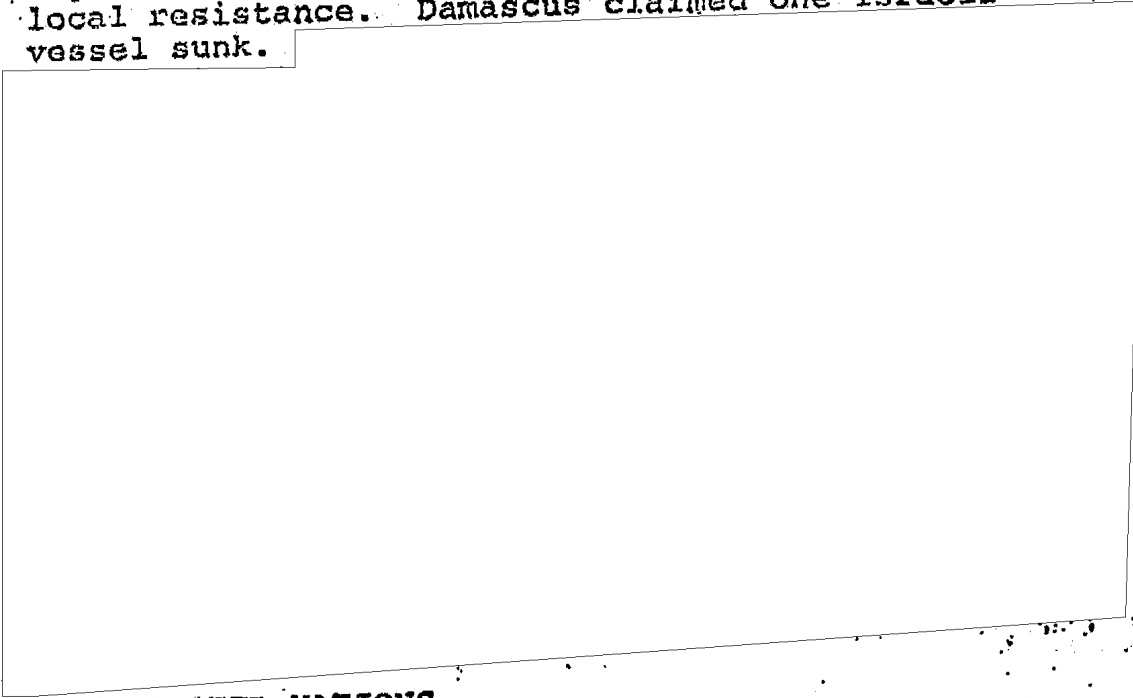
THE SYRIAN FRONT

6. Syria announced acceptance of the cease-fire resolution late this evening. Action on the Syrian front during the day consisted primarily of air engagements and artillery duels in the Mount Hermon area. The Israelis initiated heavy air strikes during the morning against targets north of Damascus and near Mount Hermon. Some of the strikes were against Syrian artillery positions which were firing on Israeli forces.



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7. A heavy naval battle reportedly was under way off the coast of Syria early this morning, according to press reports. The Israelis were shelling the ports of Latakia and Baniyas against strong local resistance. Damascus claimed one Israeli vessel sunk.



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UNITED NATIONS

10. The UN Security Council tonight passed the joint US-USSR resolution on the cease-fire by a vote

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of 14-0. China did not vote. Details will be forthcoming in the next CIA Situation Report.

11. Secretary-General Waldheim told the Security Council that three UN observer teams had been sent to posts on the northern, central, and southern sectors of the west bank of the Suez Canal and that other observers would also be sent to the east bank. The time of their arrival on the scene is not known.

ISRAEL

12. A Foreign Ministry spokesman, reacting to Moscow's strongly worded criticism of Israel for cease-fire violations, said tonight that the USSR would better serve the cause of peace by using its influence to get Syria to accept the cease-fire and Egypt to honor it. The Soviets had put all the blame on Tel Aviv for the cease-fire violations and had warned Israel of "the gravest consequences" unless its troops stop fighting.

EGYPTIAN COMMENT ON MEIR ADDRESS

13. Cairo, meanwhile, charged that Israeli Prime Minister Meir's address earlier today was a clear indication that Israeli forces intentionally violated the UN cease-fire resolution on orders from Tel Aviv. The Egyptian statement said that the US, as co-sponsor of the Security Council resolution, bears special responsibility for implementing the cease-fire. It also claimed that Mrs. Meir's references to US support proved "for the world that US military resupply was the main cause of Israel's continuous aggression."